



The Childrens Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	109115
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Inspector	Joyce Bowler
Setting Address	Civic Offices, Euclid Street, Swindon, Wiltshire, SN1 2JH
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Registered person	Swindon Borough Council
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care

ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The Children's Nursery opened in 1992. It originated as a work place nursery for the employees of Swindon Borough Council but places are now available to the wider community also. It is situated near the centre of Swindon. The premises include four main rooms plus two outside areas for outdoor play. The nursery is open 51 weeks of the year, five days a week from 08:00 to 17:30. A maximum of 72 children may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 71 children on roll.

Of these, 23 receive funding for early years education. The nursery supports children with learning difficulties and physical disabilities and those whose first language is not English.

There are 20 members of staff, 18 of these work directly with the children and all have appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children's health and well being is promoted effectively and given the highest priority by all staff working in the nursery. Children thrive because staff follow highly effective procedures and practices which meet children's physical, nutritional and health needs. The nursery holds comprehensive information on each child which is reviewed regularly ensuring that staff are aware of individual allergies and medication needs. Children are learning to take responsibility for their own hygiene and are beginning to understand not only why they should wash their hands before eating and after using the toilet, but also why they should be doing so. They are able to explain about germs and how these can cause tummy aches and make them unwell. Staff are rigorous in their hygiene routines at toileting and nappy changing times. They use disposable gloves and wash their hands before and after changing nappies. Changing mats are wiped down between each use. Records regarding children's toileting are kept to share with parents at collection time. Children who become unwell at the nursery are cared for appropriately until parents collect them. Children are protected from the risk of cross infection effectively as staff adhere to clear guidelines regarding isolation and exclusion of children with infectious diseases, diarrhoea and vomiting. Children are learning to remember their own health needs when playing out, for example, they understand why they should wear their hats and coats in cold weather and why they use sun cream in the summer. Children are helped to stay healthy in the summer as staff monitor their time in the sun and invite them to drink water regularly. Children have their own sun hats and are learning about the effects of too much sunshine. Each room has a water dispenser and children are able to help themselves when thirsty. Babies are supplied with drinks regularly in their own bottles and beakers.

Children who stay all day have a meal cooked on the premises at lunch time as well as a morning snack and afternoon tea. Menus are supplied to parents and show that weekly meals are changed on a rota basis to avoid the same meal on the same day every week. This provides variety for children who only attend on certain days each week. The nursery offers alternatives which meet children's individual dietary requirements. There is an emphasis in using ingredients which are fresh and frozen foods which are high in nutritional value, are GM free and they avoid the use of any processed foods and those with additives. Children benefit from a well designed food policy which takes account of recent initiatives in healthy eating for children in full day care. The baby room has it's own milk kitchen and food and milk preparation procedures are exemplary both in written guidelines and in practice. Staff hold appropriate food hygiene and preparation qualifications.

Children benefit from excellent access to fresh air and exercise on a twice daily basis. There are two outside play areas and children are also taken for walks around the locality and to parks. The rear garden at the nursery provides opportunities for children to use fixed play equipment with confidence. They can exercise and develop their muscles and coordination as they run, climb, balance and slide. Children have access to a good range of trikes, scooters, toy cars and push-along toys such as toy lawn mowers and wheel barrows. Other resources available include a 'Top Start' bag of P.E equipment, bats and balls. Children have the use of additional indoor space in the adjoining social hall which may be used in the afternoons. This affords a large

open space for use when the weather prevents outdoor play. Children also use the smaller outdoor play spaces immediately behind the rooms for the two to threes and three to fives age ranges. Staff are currently planning improved use of these areas to extend opportunities for children to access the full curriculum both indoors and out. Children develop their fine motor control skills by means of access to a very good range of tools and equipment. This aids their hand to eye coordination, develops pencil control and enables them to complete puzzles, use cutlery and to handle construction toys with competence.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children benefit from being cared for in an extremely secure environment where staff have excellent routines in place. These ensure that children may play in safety both indoors and out and when on outings. Very good door security ensures that no-one can gain unauthorised access to the provision. Notices remind parents to be vigilant and not to allow others access to the building or to follow them in. There are very good risk assessments made which ensure children's safety when on the premises, using equipment, enjoying activities and accessing outside areas and on outings. Examples of these include the garden check book which staff use daily as the outside areas adjoin public open space. This book details the times of checks and whether any action has been taken to make the areas safe such as the removal of a banana skin or broken glass. All children, except for the babies, are tagged with nursery identification on outings in case they should become separated from staff. Children are learning about personal safety and staff remind them regularly of safety rules in place. They learn not to run and are able to explain that it might cause an accident and they might fall over or hurt another child. There is an emergency evacuation procedure in place and drills are practised and recorded appropriately. The procedures are tailored for each room and age range on the premises to ensure swift and effective exits from the building, for example, the babies are ferried out to a travel cot at the appointed site. All fire doors are free from obstruction and fire safety equipment is maintained and checked on a regular basis.

All resources are stored safely, for example, in the baby room heavy objects are stored on lower shelves and out of reach of babies. Use of open shelving, labelled boxes and baskets throughout the nursery ensures that all children have safe access to resources and toys. Equipment and toys are checked and cleaned regularly. Older children are involved with staff in cleaning specific toys and this is detailed in the cleaning record. The effective management of space and resources ensures that children have the freedom to explore and play in a safe environment. The nursery uses the building well to create different home base rooms for each age range. Children's welfare is safeguarded effectively by trained staff who have a good knowledge and understanding of child protection issues and procedures. Children are collected by nominated persons known to the staff and there are policies in place for procedures in case of lost or uncollected children. This further supports children's welfare at the nursery.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time at the nursery and show that they are comfortable and familiar with routines and staff members, including the childcare and business managers and the cook. They achieve very well because staff are highly skilled and use their good understanding of early years guidance for the Birth to three matters framework and the Foundation Stage to provide good quality care and education. All children benefit from a well planned and appropriate range of play and learning opportunities. Staff from all rooms are familiar with the curricula for all age ranges and this enables them to move around when needed, continuing to provide appropriate care and education. This is done carefully so as not to disrupt children or remove a key worker from her key group of children. Resources are shared between the age ranges and children enjoy visiting other rooms to borrow toys and equipment, such as when two children and a member of staff went to find the play people to travel on their train set. The provision for children aged from birth to three years is very good and the framework is firmly established at the Children's Nursery. There are three rooms in the nursery designated for this age group and these are divided into the babies up to about one year, from one year to two years and from two to three years. Children are moved up when ready and staff do not adhere rigidly to ages but are lead by the readiness of each child to make the transition to the next room. Planning routines show direct relation to the stages of development for each room. The baby room has been designed and decorated to create a cosy, warm and welcoming environment. Use of mobiles, decorations and subtle lighting has the effect of lowering the ceiling and creates a magical feel to the room. Babies benefit from this environment which is conducive to settling well and being able to play, sleep and eat happily. The themes planned for this age range are adapted to meet children's needs. For example, children aged two to three are able to explore the topic on transport via creative work making prints with toy cars 'driven' through paint and on to paper and playing in the role play area which is currently a garage. Babies have a simpler approach using books, different toys associated with transport and songs to initiate their learning. All rooms assess children's progress against their development in relation to the Birth to three matters framework. Observations made show staff have a good knowledge of the children they care for and record on a regular basis. However it is not evident how these assessments are used to inform future planning, to ensure activities are tailored to the individual needs of children and to provide for the next stage in their development. All observations are shared with parents and presented in report format on a regular basis. Children have warm relationships with the staff team who know the children well. Staff interaction demonstrates genuine affection for the children and they provide appropriate cuddles and good levels of one to one attention. There are written reminders at each changing station for staff to interact with babies while changing nappies by singing, talking and reassuring them. The key worker system is established well and children benefit from the special bond they have with their key member of staff. Staff are friendly and enthusiastic and demonstrate a passion and enjoyment for their work. They are keen to share information about the nursery and their plans for the future. Staff deployment is good and enables children to move smoothly between activities and areas of the building. Meal times provide a wealth of learning opportunities which staff exploit to the full. Children and babies are learning good social skills as they sit together at small tables. They are learning to handle cutlery and to feed themselves. Children are encouraged to converse together over a good meal, to practise good manners and to enjoy their food. They are

encouraged to try new foods and to finish their meal but not forced to eat everything. All staff sit with the children at mealtimes and this creates a happy family atmosphere.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff demonstrate a good level of knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage by means of their written plans, skilful approach and good organisation of activities. Staff meet regularly and plan together as a team with the whole nursery contributing to ideas and plans for the entire curriculum. There is a good balance between adult led and child initiated activities. Planning is comprehensive and shows a direct link to the stepping stones and early learning goals. Staff break down activities and daily core activities to show learning outcomes, resources and language to be included and new vocabulary. Staff evaluate their work on an informal basis daily and in written form at the end of each week. Evaluations include ideas for the next steps for individual children. Staff know their children well and plan appropriate extension or simplification strategies into activities to meet children's needs. They make useful observations of the children as they play and these are used to complete the Swindon Record Keeping System. Reports are provided for parents on a regular basis. All staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities with regard to delivering the curriculum. Children benefit from good levels of guidance from staff who demonstrate that they know when to intervene and when to stand back and allow children to play and learn in their own time.

The room for the three to five age range is currently undergoing a change due to the siting of some new heaters and both staff and children are getting used to the new areas for construction, the role play area and the sand and water. However the designated areas for mark-making, the computer and maths are not set up effectively to allow children to access them independently or to have full access to all materials to promote learning in these areas.

Children are achieving well overall because there is a good emphasis on them growing strengths in their personal, social and emotional development. There are plenty of opportunities for children to grow in independence and self esteem. They are consulted about what resources and games they would like to get out both indoors and out. For example, after outdoor play two children help a member of staff to set out the room for the next activity. One child chose Lego from the range of construction toys and set it out ready for his friends. They are able to serve themselves at snack time and to hand around fruit or biscuits on a plate. They help to tidy up and prepare for lunch times by laying the tables. Meetings are held with the children to ask for their ideas about what could be included in new themes and staff use these ideas to plan. For example, when planning the winter theme children volunteered a list of winter words to inspire the activities to be planned. This theme will follow on from the current topic on settling into the three to five age group room and learning the routines for that room. These include learning how to dress themselves ready to play outside and great strides are being made in personal independence. Children who achieve particular milestones in their development or behaviour have special mention made on a paper leaf which is attached to the 'recognition tree'. This is shared with parents and carers and helps to promote children's good self esteem. Children are learning about acceptable behaviour at the nursery and are able to share and to take turns, for example when waiting very patiently for one of the two red scooters and saying thank you when it is their turn. Children are learning about social and cultural differences and

a range of resources supports this including dressing up clothes and books. They are able to learn about different customs, peoples and places via topics on festivals and celebrations which are integrated into nursery routines. These include celebrating birthdays with cakes made in the nursery kitchen.

Children's language development is fostered well during play as staff engage children in conversation and ask open ended questions. There is plenty of chat which is spontaneous and also linked to activities by staff who are introducing new vocabulary. Children express their ideas and thoughts with confidence during play and enjoy using new words, for example when making sand castles and announcing "hey presto" as each one was revealed. The child explained that he had seen it said on television and was obviously using it for the first time in a similar situation. Children recognise their own names on cards and use these to register their attendance on arrival. Named place mats are used at lunch times. Children are encouraged to label their own work. They have access to a cosy book corner which is equipped with a good range of fact and fiction titles which are changed regularly. Children have produced their own books in the past and these are well thumbed favourites which are full of photographs and help children to revisit previous activities and experiences. There is a mark making area but equipment supplied here for children is limited in amount and appeal.

Number skills are developed via a range of commercially produced games and opportunities during play. Children are encouraged to count, for example, when counting their group when lining up to go in and out of the building and to follow rules about how many children may play at any one time at specific activities like the sand tray. This is depicted well by children's own drawings of faces to show how many are allowed to play. They are able to use maths language and to find out about shape, size and position during construction play. Sorting and sequencing games are available in the maths area and children are learning to calculate and to solve simple problems for example, when deciding how many cups are needed at snack time. Knowledge is reinforced by regular singing of number rhymes. The maths area is not always set up ready for children to explore maths games.

Children are developing their knowledge and understanding of the world via a broad range of topics and themes with books and resources to support their learning. Children and staff create interest tables which support themes, such as the hibernation display which was made to link to the current theme on preparing for winter. Evaluations of this work include the children's discussions on making the flowerpot hibernation homes for the model hedgehogs and how the children thought that the hay and straw smelled like summer. Themes relate to children's own experiences and the locality such as going to the dentist and the seasons as well as the wider world. Use of Tourist Ted, a teddy who travels on holiday with children and comes back to recount his tales in the form of photographs introduces children to concepts of travel and other countries and places. Children create pictures, models and drawings as records of what they have done and found out. Children benefit from visits to local places of interest as well as from people such as a dentist and parents who come in to share skills and new activities. In the past these have included a father who brought in and played some drums and another who taught the children some dancing to African music. Children have access to a computer and there is a supply of age appropriate software. However this area is not set up for children to access independently. Children express their creativity through a variety of media as demonstrated in photographic evidence and planned activities. They have regular access to sand, water, paint

and play dough. They enjoy finger painting and are allowed to spend time mixing colours and spreading the paint on the table as well using it to make pictures and hand prints. Children are able to admire their own and their friends work as it is displayed well around the room and includes large group displays as well as individual pictures. The role play corner is changed regularly and often links to themes. It has recently been a shoe shop and is now a supermarket and is well equipped with a trolley, stocked shelves and a cash register. Children enjoy singing, listening to music and dancing. Children's imaginary play is supported through the provision of dressing up clothes, props for role play such as hairdressing equipment and small world figures, animal and models. Children are actively enjoying and organising their own play and are allowed to move resources around the room as their play develops. For example, children used the whole room to expand the play when dressing the baby dolls and took them to visit the supermarket and then arranged the tea set at a table for a party. Children also select toys to use in the sand and negotiate this between themselves, for example when choosing between buckets and spades and dinosaur models.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children and their parents and carers receive an excellent welcome to the nursery both in the written material provided and in the inclusive and friendly approach taken by all staff members. The nursery demonstrates its equal opportunities policy in practice and achieves the highest standards for promoting anti-discriminatory practice. The prospectus includes a statement on how the nursery will work towards helping children learning to respect each other, and to play happily and cooperatively together in order to grow into confident individuals who will be able to challenge prejudice in the future. There is a great emphasis put on ensuring children settling in well at the nursery and staff are aware of children's basic needs and what they need to do to make this happen. Procedures are driven by the aims and vision of the nursery and a child's need for love and security. Children's needs are met extremely well and interests fostered effectively as staff collate a comprehensive set of information and records regarding their needs and support this with intelligent assessments. The nursery ethos and curriculum content promotes positive images of multicultural and ethnic diversity in modern society. All ages and relationships are reflected in work covered, for example when working on the theme 'all about me' children were asked to bring in photos of their families. All children were included and staff were sensitive to the different make up of individual families, for example, recognising the needs of single parents, those with and without grandparents and even including pets who are very often regarded as full members of a family. Children with siblings in the nursery often meet up for meals or are taken for walks together in order to maintain and strengthen family ties. Older children enjoy visiting their baby brothers or sisters for lunch in the baby rooms. Children's special needs are catered for very well and staff liaise with parents and relevant support agencies as appropriate. The nursery supports children with learning difficulties as well as physical disabilities. Children with English as an additional language are supported via a variety of strategies to help them to settle in and to make their needs known to staff. Staff take time to find out about specific languages and to learn words which may be familiar to the children to identify the need for a drink or to use the toilet. Staff are considering the introduction of visual aids to supplement this work. Children develop a very good sense of self and are valued

as members of the nursery. This positive approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well.

Behaviour management is consistent and children understand the rules for acceptable behaviour in the nursery. They are encouraged from the earliest age to practise good manners. Children are able to share, to take turns and to play cooperatively together. Any differences of opinion are resolved quickly as staff request children to apologise and give a hug to the offended child. Children do so readily and show that they can tell the difference between right and wrong. Staff explain behaviour rules gently and show a sensitivity for the age and stage of each child. There are specific rules and guidance for each room and according to the needs of each age range, for example, in the one to two age room there is written guidance for staff on how to deal with biting. Children aged from two to three are helped to negotiate taking turns and learning to share. Older children aged three to five are reminded not to run indoors and are learning to close doors behind them and to tidy up by themselves.

The partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. The nursery establishes very good lines of communication with parents and carers before children start to attend by offering familiarisation visits. Staff welcome parents and children on arrival and have established excellent exchanges of verbal feedback at drop off and collection times. Newsletters and the notice boards provide parents with highly informative and relevant information including how to contact Ofsted and the complaints procedure. This combination of informal chats and formal written information ensures that an excellent level of communication is maintained. Records kept relate to eating, sleeping and nappy changes or toileting and staff share full details of the child's day with parents. This is underpinned by effective record keeping for administration of medication and full parental permissions for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment, to take photographs and to take children on outings. Parents receive a copy of the attractive and informative prospectus which contains a précis of all policies and procedures and comprehensive information on the Foundation Stage and Birth to three matters framework. Full copies of these documents are available in each of the rooms, on parents notice boards and in the nursery office. Each room has a notice board which displays information relevant to the children attending, the curriculum content and current topics and themes and ideas for parents to become involved and contribute by bringing in resources or coming in to share a skill. This promotes very good continuity of care and learning as parents are familiar with songs and activities taking place in the nursery and may continue the learning and fun at home. Staff have used questionnaires to gain feedback from parents, for example when devising the new food policy, and they use this to evaluate their provision. There is a parents committee who hold a forum and also fundraise for the nursery. Two parents sit on the steering group for the nursery along with the senior management group and representatives from Swindon Borough Council. The 'Parents Partnership' policy underpins the success of this working relationship and includes details relating to the subjects including the curriculum, working with families, resources, food and festivals, special needs, communication and training.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The setting meets the needs of the group of children for whom it provides.

Leadership and management are outstanding. Excellent procedures in monitoring and evaluating the provision are established well and demonstrate clear purpose and a commitment to continual improvement. The operational plan shows how effective coordination ensures that the four rooms are run effectively together as one nursery. There are clear directions set as part of the nursery ethos and in the vision statement which are shared with parents in the prospectus and on notice boards around the nursery. For example one aim for the baby room is that all staff are committed to ensuring that babies are "loved, feel secure, comfortable and that their health and happiness is paramount". Both the business and the childcare managers have clearly defined roles and responsibilities and work together to encourage staff to continually strive for improvements and the highest standards in their work. The success of this is demonstrated in the steps taken over the years to improve the provision. For example an action plan was formulated with all staff, including senior nursery staff and assistants, to address areas identified as weaknesses by the nursery itself. This current action plan for 2004 to 2006 is coming to an end and actions taken have been recorded and evaluated. The nursery takes part in the Validated Setting Self Review, or VSSR, which has been introduced by the local early years partnership and is monitored by the local advisory teacher. Examples of future improvements highlighted by the staff include the need to review snack time procedures and to extend the full curriculum into the outside space. They have also accessed the Ofsted 'Safe and Sound' report to examine their own practice and evaluate how well they are achieving the outcomes for children. Staff are motivated by means of regular staff meetings and having their views and ideas acted upon. They receive very good levels of in-service training and are monitored by senior staff. Training information is cascaded throughout the team and the childcare manager produces training and resource packs for staff to refer to in-house. This is currently underway for recent additional training on specific aspects of the Birth to threes framework and child protection safeguarding children training. Areas for improvement identified and addressed over the past two years include developing the provision in the two to three's room, creating an all-weather surface for outside play, strategies to cope with staff absence and new policies for food and ingredients for meals cooked on the premises. Staff are line-managed effectively with regular appraisals and opportunities to contribute to their personal development plans. There is a staff induction pack and a welcome document for volunteers and students. All employment procedures are carried out in line with Swindon Borough Council guidelines and staff records include full details of vetting and qualifications which demonstrate their suitability to work with children.

Both the childcare and business managers put the nursery ethos into practice and create a welcoming and happy environment for children and the staff team. Excellent communication and working relationships are maintained. This produces a harmonious and friendly atmosphere throughout the nursery.

Documentation is of an exceptionally high quality. All policies and procedures are in place and these are supplemented by additional documents which reinforce the commitment to excellence at this nursery. These include the confidentiality policy, the food management control and hazard analysis, and the 'Parents Partnership' policy. Sleep registers in the baby room include useful notes on comforters and time restrictions requested by parents. Attendance registers are completed accurately for each room. The organisation of space and time is effective, for example, snack and lunch times are arranged to meet the needs of children who have had an

early start to their day. All records are easily accessible for inspection and daily use, such as when completing accident and medication books.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they may see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- Develop the use of the assessment records for children in the birth to three age range to ensure that they are used to inform future planning of activities to meet their individual needs

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- Review the organisation of the room for the three to fives in order to support children effectively in all activities and areas of learning.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education* (HMI ref no 2599) which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk